

Alzheimer's disease and related dementias create a huge burden for the caregivers who are usually family members. These burdens include emotional, physical, and financial entities. These are increased due to the isolation within our rural state, lack of educated medical providers that include primary care providers as well as specialists who may be asked to diagnose a younger onset Alzheimer's disease, hospitals and all their staff, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, community based services (home care among them) and respite care centers. I have had people tell me that they had no one to guide them as they traveled through their journey with their loved one: how to care for someone who needed total care, how to plan financially so the family was not devastated, and how it took years for the family to rebound from the emotional toll. Education and support groups would lessen these burdens. These two entities could be accomplished through webinars, on line meetings, or video conferencing to lessen the distances we experience everywhere in Montana.

We must pass supportive legislation for the ADRD State Plan so that Montanans can feel as though they are part of a community that is supportive of them and addressing this health care crisis.

-Dr. Lottie Eaton, Alzheimer's Association, Montana Board of Directors